

STRUCTURAL SPECIFICS OF ENGLISH SCIENTIFIC TEXTS: PREDICATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Abstract: the paper looks into the structural specifics of different predicative structures featured in English scientific texts, unveils structural characteristics of English and Russian scientific texts. An attempt is made to classify and systematize different predicative patterns.

Key words: scientific text, predicativity, predicative structures.

Predicativity is commonly viewed as «a syntactic category that manifests functional specifics of a sentence as the basic unit of syntax; it serves as the key constitutive feature of a sentence that relates information to reality which endows a sentence with meaning; a category that makes the sentence different from all other syntax units» In other words, predicativity establishes a link between the content of the utterance and reality. This link is commonly revealed through the relation between the subject and its characteristics.

Contemporary linguistics views predicativity as a syntactic category due to the fact that syntactic features of a text determine its function, its form and, consequently, its message.

Against the background of integration and globalization of science, there is an obvious need to translate scientific texts and make them available to scientists from different countries (speaking different languages and having different cultural backgrounds). Thus, it is essential to study various syntactic features of scientific texts, which are central to translation.

It is a well-known fact that scientific texts are characterized by their high information content. As opposed to this, the current trend in the development of the English language lies in minimizing the number of language units used (economizing). As a result, a scientific text is expected to be brief, yet deliver a clear message. These conflicting trends lead to syntactic compression, which implies compressing the text by increasing

its information content. This can be effected through specific sentence structure.

To unveil ways to compress the text and increase its information content we carried out a study with 50 scientific texts in English from electronic versions of linguistic journals.

The analysis of the empirical data showed that English scientific texts most commonly employ **complex predicative structures**. These structures are embedded in complex sentences with several subject-predicate partnerships, reflecting several denotative situations: *This study examines the problems of translation (1) that the genre of popular science feature articles poses for translators (2) and investigates the methods (3) followed in dealing with these problems and their ability to produce adequate translations (4).*

Complex predicative structures may include participial and infinitive clauses, which are structurally classified as **semi-predicative structures**: *With this fact in hand, it is time to turn to the other aspect of the null hypothesis: Are English segmental frequency distributions unitary? (Absolute clause); Even if the empirical focus is rather narrow, it is to be hoped that the article is of general interest, since the methodological points of this study **are likely to generalize** to other domains (Subject-with-the-Infinitive construction); We consider **him to be** the best pupil of our school (Object-with-the-Infinitive construction); Once the child begins to develop phoneme categories, these representations focus the child's attention onto JUST that information which is relevant **for the word-referent mapping to occur**, so leaving sufficient computational resources to learn the word (For-to-the-Infinitive construction); The company itself has had a complicated history, **passing out** of the hands of chemists Lea and Perrins in the 1930's **to join** HP sauces (Infinitive of subsequent action); Recent corpus linguistic (CL) investigations of academic discourse (both written and spoken) have tended to use easily excisable lexical items and/or grammatical forms **to determine** what is 'special' about the language of academia, and **to compare** and contrast particular disciplines or subjects with each other (Infinitive of purpose).*

Moreover, complex predicative structures may feature **structures with curtailed predicativity**: *Dulay et al. (1982) argue that errors in **form-focused** tests occur when ... / Reduplication in some cultures is a form of informal wordplay that is chosen over dry straight-forward discourse to convey intensity, humor, and playfulness, while applying cutesy, **tongue-***

tickling or whimsical sounds and words / This more diffuse deployment of attentional resources therefore leaves fewer resources available to create **form-referent** mappings and commit them to memory. (N + V-ed/V-ing/Adj); Findings from individual case studies of children aged 1; 4, 1;9 and 1;10 over a **one-year** period suggest there are.../ For example, **fast-mapping** studies in children between the ages of three and thirteen years have shown that... (Adj + Num + N/V-ing).

English scientific texts may feature **full predictive models**, which are represented by simple sentences with one subject and one predicate. Yet they are not very frequent. Moreover, unlike Russian scientific texts they don't feature impersonal sentences: *The study builds on existing research in two areas* -> *Основа работы представлена существующими исследованиями в двух областях.*

It is also important to mention **latent predicativity** which exists in the English language and isn't represented in the Russian language. These are structures in which the action itself is not verbalized, but can be derived from the context. Such latent actions may be signaled by adjectives in the comparative degree or participles which denote a change in the quantitative or qualitative state of the object or its transition into a new state: *higher level, better condition: The learning curve seems to start with **higher** awareness* (-> the awareness has increased) *and a **better** supply* (-> the supply has improved) *of a feature which already exists in the L1 (the definite article), but with **improved** PLs* (-> the PLs have been refined) *and **reduced** L1 influence* (-> the L1 influence has decreased), *the trend gradually shifts towards a **better** conceptualization* (-> the conceptualization has been improved), *and therefore a **higher** production* (-> the production has increased), *of the newly acquired feature (the indefinite article).*

Another way of representing latent predicativity in English is to use verbs denoting gestures, commands, etc. in combination with a preposition or an adverb showing direction *in, out, with* (*wave in, help out*): *He **waved** her **out** of the room* (-> *He **waved** to her to make her **leave** the room*). However, these structures are more typical in fiction and mass media articles, and are not common in scientific ones.

The findings of the analysis suggest that complex predicative structures are most common in scientific texts written in English. This can be explained by the fact that full, extended sentences help to make the message clear and transparent. Semi-predicative structures represented by

infinitive clauses (mainly with infinitives of purpose) are also frequent. The frequency of Subject-with-the-Infinitive constructions is relatively high, whereas the frequency of For-to-the-Infinitive constructions is low. These findings are in line with the typological features of the English language as well as characteristic features of the scientific discourse.

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СПЕЦИФИКА РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ КАТЕГОРИИ ПРЕДИКАТИВНОСТИ В АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОМ НАУЧНОМ ТЕКСТЕ

Аннотация: в статье рассматриваются особенности реализации категории предикативности в англоязычных научных текстах, устанавливаются структурные параллели между англоязычным и русскоязычным научным текстом и предпринимается попытка классификации и систематизации различных предикативных структур.

Ключевые слова: научный текст, предикативность, предикативные структуры.

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